

## *The Gustav & Rosalie Steinke Family*

We are fifth generation Steinkes with memories of Opa Gustav and Oma Rosalie (who would have been third generation Steinkes).



Having always been a very close-knit family, it was very easy through discussions with parents and grandparents to become interested in our past. We were very fortunate in that both sets of grandparents always lived very close to us or shared our home at various times.

Opa Gustav was only nine when he lost his mother. His oldest sister, Anna Julianna, took the place of his mother and he always felt very close to her and her family.

Opa Gustav was a very quiet, unassuming man. Circumstances made him immigrate to North America in the 1890's. Although his stay was only about three to five years, he spoke fondly of skyscrapers in the U.S.A., farm work in Southern Manitoba, and canalization in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We were aware of harsh winters and quick and beautiful springs before we even set foot in this country.

Receiving news from his siblings that his father had passed away and if he wanted his inheritance, he needed to return to Wolhynia. His quiet nature had made it difficult for him to make friends, leaving him very lonely and making the decision to return easier.

Shortly after his return, on November 16, 1899, he married Rosalie Schulz, the daughter of Gottlieb and Susanne Schulz nee Gebauer. He was the last of three Steinke brothers (Johann Jr., Friedrich and Gustav) marrying three Schulz sisters (Justine, Amalie and Rosalie).

In no time at all, the Russian Government had discovered that Opa Gustav was back in the country and was now available for compulsory army service. After a short training session, Opa Gustav was transported all the way across Russia to fight the Japanese. After weeks of travel, he arrived and was informed that the war with the Japanese was over. By return transport, he was re-assigned to the Turkish front where he was required to fight for his country.

Upon completion of his military service, he returned home to Wolhynia and started farming and raising his family; Huldreich, who died accidentally as a toddler, Albert (our father), Edwin, Olga and Theodore who died as an infant.

Life in those days was harsh, and in no time World War I was on the doorstep. Opa was again called to serve in the Russian Army. Oma Rosalie was left behind with three young children, struggling to survive, and ending up in East Prussia. Eventually the war ended; they returned to their land in Wolhynia, to rebuild and start over again.

Religion was very important to Opa Gustav. In his search for peace in his heart, he became acquainted with the Church of God movement. He spent the rest of his life searching for the truths in his Bible and living by them.

Time moved along, the children grew up and eventually married. History repeated itself and three Steinkes (Albert, Edwin and Olga) married three Debus' siblings (Alwine, Else and Friedrich). Olga and Friedrich's marriage was short as she died very suddenly on their first anniversary.

World War II again brought many hardships to Opa and Oma. After the War the family was finally reunited in Beinum, Germany. Within a short time, both sons and their families immigrated to Canada. We lived together only long enough for Opa to teach Gerda how to read in German. His gentleness and patience left a lasting memory with her.

A lonely Opa and Oma relocated to Bayreuth, Bavaria where his nephew and niece were living. Opa's health deteriorated due to stomach cancer and he died in Bayreuth on January 12, 1953. Oma Rosalie joined her sons in Canada the following summer. She lived with her son, Albert, in Winnipeg, until her death on September 5, 1964.

Herbert Steinke & Gerda Krause  
August, 2000